

CORADDI

WINTER
1944



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MISS JULIA TAYLOR, *Dikean Marshal*,
wearing a Fuschia dressmaker suit, with
black accessories from our outstanding
collection.

MONTALDO'S

C O R A D D I

VOL. XLIX

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No. 2

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, GREENSBORO, N. C.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COVER	<i>Marian Weller</i>
FRONTISPIECE	<i>Mary Berry</i> 2
BREAKING GROUND	3
AFTER CLASS	<i>Jean Ross</i> 4
RUSSKY	<i>Irene Kossow</i> 6
DUGAN'S	<i>Nancy Bowers</i> 7
DALLYING WITH DALI	<i>Angela Snell</i> 8
TRADITION IS EXPERIMENT	<i>Martha Posey</i> 9
DREAMS	<i>Grace Estep</i> 9
POIGNARD	<i>Bonnie McCloy</i> 9
ON SECOND FLOOR	<i>Vici DeVoe</i> 10
RETURN	<i>Avis Russell</i> 10
CONFLICT	<i>Gay Morenus</i> 10
BELLS	<i>Mildred Rodgers</i> 10
SARAH	<i>Dave Blalock</i> 11
CAMP TO CAMPUS	12

*Mary Berry*

BREAKING GROUND

It's easy, of course, to echo a fad, whether the current fad is to say, "Oh, the CORADDI is obscure; trying to be modern, you know," or to say, "The art department is just modern, you know. Why can't we have a picture that looks like something?"

So the staff gathered around the table, elbows on knees, chins in palms, looking as statuesque and thoughtful as possible, and said: "What can we do with this magazine that is supposed to be so far above everybody's head? What *is* our editorial policy?"

"Well, the college can educate average students to be followers if it wants to," said a pudgy artist. "We won't, absolutely can't put on a slick job full of pretty, precious pieces designed to hurt no one's feelings."

"No, we can't lower standards of writing," said another. "We must try to present the best creative work done here to the campus."

"Yes, and ideas, too," interrupted the Sociologist. "We want to reflect the constructive thought of students—if there is any."

"Yes, but—" from the solid citizen in the far corner—"let's not put in anything *we* can't understand."

"That's all right. We won't publish anything the staff doesn't understand. We aren't geniuses—if we were, we would be in trouble with the administration and most of the faculty. So if we can 'get it' so can the campus."

"Then are we agreed?" asked the editor. "We will publish work from any student and we will set as standards: good writing; honest, original, creative work; ideas; and, in general, a relationship to college life."

The cover picture, shot originally by Marian Weller, became a community project when Ginny and Dr. Reardon slaved to enlarge it. The "virtuous lamppost" you will recognize, and the season has descended upon us. We wavered in our choice of frontispiece, and decided upon a familiar campus scene which is good creative work with an imaginative treatment. Judy Taylor posed for our Montaldo portrait; she is an acceleree and pretty enough to be a marshal.

Jean Ross in "After Class" has met anyone's standards of good writing. We know high schools, and we know girls like Mildred who are scorned for their selfish egotism and "come-on" tactics. Kossow gives us a character-study-story; "Fine!" we all exclaimed, "Let's publish it."

The staff disagreed on who was satirized most in Angela Snell's "Dallying with Dali." Artists said it was the author, solid citizens thought the woman, a few poets settled on Dali. As always, the reader decides. Posey offers some meaty ideas in her discussion of tradition and experiment in art, a theme for the coming Arts Forum.

This issue is largely devoted to fiction, and the last two pieces also have a familiar setting. Dare Blalock's "Sarah" lives in the tobacco piedmont surrounding Greensboro. Vici DeVoe's short sketch takes place in a Woman's College dormitory room, and unfortunately, you have met "Dot" down the hall.

The poets hope to contribute zest and lyric punch to the magazine. We call attention to Avis Russell's poem, and we defy anyone to say that she "can't understand the poetry!"

AFTER CLASS

By JEAN ROSS

It was all over town about Mildred and Mr. McAllister by the end of the summer. It was old to me by then; once in a while I wondered if I should add my bit when the gossip passed me on its way around. But looking back, it all seemed rather trivial, and I decided not to.

It didn't amount to too much when I tried to remember how it all started; all of those days in physics class my senior year in high school seemed to have been only a few weeks, and those fall afternoons dwindled to a few days that I remember . . .

Physics class was downstairs, and the windowsills were nearly on a level with the ground, so that we watched the legs of everybody that went by, though of course we could see all of them unless the shades were drawn. Mr. McAllister had worked the problems on the board that afternoon, instead of sending one of us up when he knew we couldn't work them, the way he usually did. Mildred and I had gone down to the lab that morning to get him to help us, and she had said, "You're sweet when you work 'em on the board." Mr. McAllister had looked at the problems in her book a long time then, trying to suppress a very persistent smile as he stared at them with his elbows on the high table that we were leaning against, in the lab. After a while he pulled a piece of paper out of his pocket and folded it, and began to scribble figures on it.

"Well, don't you know how to work it?" Mildred asked after a while, when he stopped to look at the book a long time.

He grinned at her and returned to the book. It was time for the bell then, so I decided to get them from her later; but she didn't have them. Evidently he had wanted to be sweet and work them on the board.

He had worked them after lecturing a while. He always lectured without looking at us, usually grasping the back of the chair and looking down at the desk, though he probably knew what was going on even with the loud bunch at the back of the room. He heard them whispering while he was working the problems, and he turned and glared at a spot on the floor in front of the room. "You can settle down back there now, anytime;" and he turned back to the board holding his head in a defiant way. He remembered to call the roll after he worked the problems, and went through it very fast in his low voice, touching the names with his pencil. Some days he would grin suddenly and broadly at Mildred's name; but that day he left it out. I heard somebody near the front giggle, and Mildred, just in front of me, turned around and made a face of exasperation with her mouth twisted; but her eyes looked as though she were enjoying it a little. After all, he was Mr. McAllister, the physics teacher.

After everybody had gone to work again copying the problems, Mr. McAllister opened his physics book for a while. Then he closed it again, and began playing with a pencil, marking on the cover of the desk. He looked up once and glanced at Mildred, then around the room. His eyes looked almost a little wide then; but his mouth came open—he had large, dingy teeth. Usually he blushed too, and the front of his head, where there wasn't any hair got red too; farther back on his head he had some thin, reddish-brown hair.

I began to wonder if he was going to want Mildred and me to do any work for him that afternoon. We had lab two days a week, and the last period was empty on the others, so Mr. McAllister used to ask us to do things for him sometimes. That started in biology our sophomore year; one day after class he asked us two if we would like to be in the science club. We said yes, when did it meet? He looked down at his desk and said it didn't have meetings but the members just worked on some sort of project in the room next door. So we spent an hour a day down there from then on, making posters on the planets, and on insects. Then the next year Mildred asked him if we could have a study period down there because the noise in the upstairs study hall bothered her. He was basketball coach that year, so we made a lot of posters for the games. Sometimes he would stand by and watch Mildred work on them, not saying anything, but grinning broadly now and then. Sometimes he would seem conscious of somebody else in the class; but Mildred was the prettiest—and studious, too; and she noticed it more than any of the others. Sometimes he came up to the upstairs study hall to get her to do something for him in the afternoon, and sometimes both of us, or somebody else now and then—but not often. We always worked in his little office behind the lab—a long, narrow one with shelves that held mounted beetles, and crayfish, and snakes, and things in glass bottles.

I began to think about Mr. McAllister—I used to do that a lot some afternoons. He was the sort of person you could think about a lot without getting very far. People in high school had different ideas about him. Some of them maintained he was a "good teacher" because he began at the beginning of the assignment and explained it to the end, and before tests, under a heavily underlined "know" he listed on the board the material the test would be on, and it was always on that. Some of the others seemed to think he was funny, especially his blushing and silences. The town discussed the way he preceded his wife on occasions, by several feet in fact, and somebody started some interesting rumors once—about his having been jilted some time or other, and burning his Bible then. But I just couldn't see Mr. McAllister doing violent things like that. There wasn't too

much intensity in the way he acted toward Mildred even—it seemed to be mostly pleasant embarrassment. But then she had said they walked to school together sometimes, and that probably involved some careful timing on his part . . .

I was still wondering about our prospects for the afternoon. It was a few minutes before time for the bell to ring and Mr. McAllister went over to the window and stood looking out at the sky with his back to us. I felt as though he were enjoying the weather outside. The boys who had been playing baseball outside on the playground that period came straggling in, and stood on the walk outside. The water-fountain gurgled.

The bell rang upstairs; the sound was a little muffled down there, but we heard a lot of feet tramping in the halls. I gathered up my books. Mr. McAllister was coming back to his desk. I nearly reached the door.

"Edith." I turned and he looked down at the desk, straightening a stack of papers.

"Can you and Mildred stay?"

"I guess I can." Mildred was coming up behind me.

"Can you stay?" He looked at her almost coldly.

"What do you want us to do?" She sounded as though she might condescend.

He started out the door with the papers in one hand, Mildred put her arm through mine, and we went across the hall to the lab. People were leaving the hall now; our end of it was empty. We went on into the office beyond the lab, and I put my books down. Mr. McAllister was flipping through his rollbook. He looked up and smiled at Mildred, then wet his thumb to turn a few more pages. He took a stack of papers out of one of the pigeonholes and put them on the open rollbook. He looked at me then.

"You can copy these in here—the third column."

I sat down. He passed behind my chair. The office was so narrow that two people couldn't pass at once. I started spreading all the papers out to arrange them alphabetically. I realized I hadn't been down there with Mildred in two or three weeks.

Mildred sat down on the corner of the desk. "What do you do with all these old papers, Mr. McAllister? You don't ever correct 'em—just to make people work?"

Mr. McAllister put one hand on my chair-back and leaned on it for a minute. I finished the B's.

"Don't look at me like that!" Mildred's voice sounded petulant.

"Like what?"

"You know . . . You're just a flirt."

"I'm not—I'm perfectly serious."

Mildred had a yearning to be dramatic anyway, I told myself; at least she said she listened to three or four radio serials a day.

"Oh, stop." I glanced up. Her green eyes looked a little darker; probably he had disturbed one of her neatly-done curls. I straightened the stack of papers, making as much noise as I could.

"The old flirt! I hate him." He had gone noiselessly. Mildred was breathing a little faster. She walked over to the glass doors along the wall to my back, and looked at the shelves inside. She came back to the desk and looked over my shoulder. I was trying to change the expression on my face.

"Oh!" She slipped back of my chair and went to the long table beside the desk, which had all his books on it, and began opening them, flipping through the leaves; then shaking them upside down.

"What?"

She picked up a dark green book, and it fell open about the middle.

"Look," She laughed and held it out. It was still in the shape of a curl, brown-streaked gold. She lifted it up and blew the tiny bits from the page. "He cut it off one day—Helen and I were combing our hair just before school was out, down here, and he got the scissors and cut it off at the back. But it didn't show much."

I suddenly remembered the day she asked Mr. McAllister, in the project room, if he liked her hair turned under and he said he didn't—but she kept on doing it that way until she cut it. And then one day he wore a new pair of green and gray striped pants with a bright green belt, and she told him she liked them, and he said he thought she would . . . Mildred was looking at it again, as if she were thinking too. I heard Mr. McAllister in the hall.

She looked up, the book still open in her hands. I smiled at him because I felt uncomfortable for some reason, but he didn't see me. He saw the book and grinned broadly, and slid behind my chair and grabbed at the book, or at her arm. But she jerked away and shut it and put it down on the desk. She folded her arms.

"Silly!"

He didn't say anything, but I saw his feet were moving. I copied in two more grades and there was the end. I didn't want to look up just then, but I wanted to go; he had probably forgotten I was there . . .

"Oh, leave me alone!" Her voice was rather shrill.

I stood up. "I'm through."

His hands were at his sides. He looked suddenly tired. "All right."

I went out and Mildred followed me, her arms still folded. We walked down the hall and up the stairs without saying anything.

The three o'clock bell rang as we reached the top of the stairs, and chairs began scraping on the floor in the library and everybody began rushing out of rooms and opening and slamming lockers. After most of them left, I went to my locker, carried my books out to the porch, and went back in to the library to wait till the school-bus had come back from its first trip. I watched the school-children crossing the street; where

(Continued on page 14)

RUSSKY

By IRENE KOSSOW

The conversation had drifted to First Love.

"Actually, it boils down a pair of simple factors," remarked one gentleman. "Sensuality and sentimentality. What we call 'first love' is a biological phenomenon which almost invariably follows puberty and to which we invariably accord the softest spot in our memories. Through years we cherish it; we surround it with the aura of violets and honey . . . But let me ask this: How many of us would consider the object of our first love today?"

There was a pause intended for reflection.

"I would," said our hostess, smiling. She was sitting by the fire, and in its shadows we could not discern whether her smile was a challenge or a mockery.

But her husband was aroused. "Ah, would you now?" he cried, crossing over to her. "And pray, who was the scoundrel whom you favored?"

"I've completely forgotten his name, darling," she replied.

"Aha, then that means I'll have to beat it out of you," bellowed the colonel. But turning to his guests he winked, "She just wants to be coaxed."

We were not averse to coaxing her. Arkechevskaya was a speckled personality. Her misty origins, and her loves—which were as indeterminate as her age—made for good listening. So, weary and relaxed as we were after a day spent atop the colonel's horses on the colonel's lands, we were content to listen to the colonel's wife.

He settled close to her and observed her with proud satisfaction—the same proud satisfaction with which he observed his thoroughbreds. Arkechevskaya turned her head in the opposite direction and began her narrative.

* * *

All of you here are such cosmopolites, perhaps you have visited even our borough. And if you ever have, you couldn't have missed refreshing yourselves at Dugan's Cafeteria, "The Oasis of Brooklyn." Chances are you had French fries or chicken salad or maybe both, because they were our Big Specials, and only ten cents a serving in those days. Well, whichever you had, potatoes or salad, you touched upon the life of my love—remotely, of course, but few people had the good fortune to know Russky first-hand.

Russky's name was Michael. His last name was said to be fictitious. From this clue I deduced that his descent was princely—an assumption which was never verified, but nevertheless enhanced his tragic figure.

As a matter of fact Russky was Dugan's potato peeler and chicken plucker.—Perhaps you people look down upon potato peelers and chicken pluckers; but you wouldn't have looked down upon

Russky. No one ever did, not even old Shylock, our boss, after he learned his lesson. What a lesson! Dugan's employees relished it for weeks. It seems that once when he was snooping around the old miser had detected a leaking faucet in the kitchen. He'd turned on Russky and screeched, "And who pays for that? No, not you, you swine! It's my blood you're stealing, *my* blood!" Russky merely said, "Tovarishstsh, I wish it were," and asked him to shut up. But the old Shylock wouldn't stop, so my love punched him in the nose. And thereafter the boss always treated him with the utmost respect.

When I met Russky I was very young, and dense. But even with my meagre powers of perception I could see that he was made on a fine, deep grain. That the grain was warped, well, that was harder for me to discern, and harder still to accept. My poor dear mother had brought me up to be a lady "in spite of everything," and she would have turned white with indignation had she ever discovered my attachment for Russky—a barbarian because he had no family, no home, no money, no morals—only a wicked fascination for innocent girls.

I remember the first time I saw Russky. I had heard all sorts of things about him, mostly from Mike Sullivan, a middle-aged alcoholic in charge of bread and cole slaw. This fellow Russky, he said, hell, he was O. K. He spoke a dozen different languages, knew all of Russian literature by heart, and wrote poetry that nobody understood. Sullivan spoke of him reverently, and boastfully at the same time. From the manager to the smallest bus boy, they were all proud of Russky, the lost genius in their midst. So you can imagine how incongruous it was to see this wonder for the first time—bent on the task of disemboweling hens.

I introduced myself, and he seemed glad to hear a Russian voice. He was no longer young or handsome, but his shoulders were still bold, and his eyes alive and humorous. He looked very clean. He was, in fact the only clean man at Dugan's. I felt that if I were to come close to him, he would even smell cool, like pines . . . Well, as I said, he was drawing chickens that morning, and being a straightforward child, unmindful of diplomacy, I asked him by and by, "If you are such a scholar, what are you doing here plucking chickens?"

For a moment he looked vacant; then he blinked and laughed, "Oh my dear little girl," he laughed, "I don't mind it. You see, I'm a philosopher, and these chickens here are my friends—the fallen comrades through whom I perceive the pattern of life."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Simply this: We pull the hide off the little ones, while the big ones pull the hide off our backs."

"Oh, no," I protested. "No one will ever pull the hide off my back."

"Good," he smiled, "I hope not. It's such a pretty hide . . . soft and rosy—like the breast of a young dove."

I looked up at that. His eyes caught my glance and held it for a moment. "Little dove," he said softly. But I caught myself. "Foolishness," I declared. "What kind of doves are they that have rosy hides?"

I did not see Russky again that day. I served behind the steam tables, while he worked downstairs in the "rat hole"—our kitchen. I'll never forget that filthy cellar. The air in it was always soggy, and the walls sweated out all kinds of evil-smelling moistures. At the bottom of the stairs we had an employee's table, pushed against a wall that bore the markings of many soup splashes. And the bruises and furrows of the table

top were clogged with the remains of many dinners.—Before I sat down I spread some napkins before me, whereupon Sullivan nudged his neighbor and they both began to smirk. Soon Russky passed by.

"Hey, Russky," huffed Sullivan, "Are all them Russian dames duchesses like this one?"

Russky did not favor him with a reply. "Why do you eat with these fatheads?" he asked me in Russian.

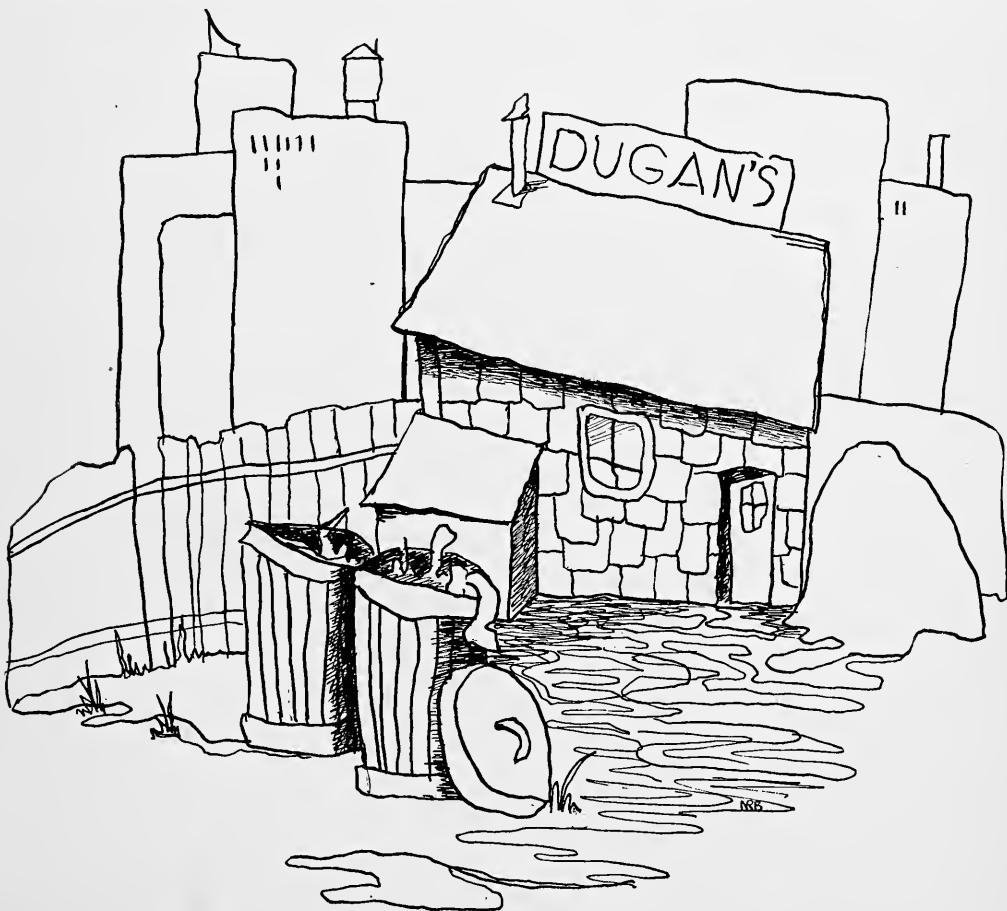
"Where else can I eat?"

"In the yard. You sit on milk cans; but the air is fresh, and the cockroaches do not climb into your plate."

"Are they so impudent here?"

"Why shouldn't they be? They outnumber us a thousand to one."

(Continued on page 15)



DALLYING WITH DALI

By ANGELA SNELL

Oh my, I'm tired. I'll just sit a spell on this bench and rest my feet. It was right smart of me to come in here. Art galleries are real nice places to set in. Now I'll just take off my shoes. Ah, my feet feel better already. A woman my age ought to have enough sense to wear sensible shoes. I always say a woman forty years old owes it to herself to have a comfortable pair of shoes and a good corset.

Traipsing over town shopping ain't so good on my feet. As if the housework weren't enough. I've never seen Junior act up so at the table. Bringing worms to breakfast. He takes after his father more every day. Mrs. Brown told me I wouldn't find a thing in the city. Imagine charging \$14.95 for that black dress! I could make one easy for five dollars. It was soiled too. Women that wear lipstick—the painted huzzies!

Last time I was to a museum was the Metropolitan in New York. John'll never forget the talking to I gave him for taking me there. On our honeymoon too. It's taken me twenty years to break John of his high falutin' ideas. I never did have much truck with those museum pictures. They're not half as pretty as the pictures on my calendar in the kitchen.

Well, I do declare, this is comfy in here. Thought for a minute it was a private office, what with Salvador Dali written on the door. Another of those artist fellows probably. Seems to me I recollect something about this Dali in the paper—smashing a store window with a bath tub. Just goes to prove artists are queer in the head. My goodness, what *is* that picture on the wall? I can't see the name of it from here. I'll just slip on my shoes . . . feet have no business swelling this way. Now let's see. It says *The feeling of becoming* by Salvador Dali. Why, it's the picture of a girl hiding behind a sheet. *The feeling of becoming* . . . Well, that sheet certainly isn't becoming to the girl. She's awfully skinny—reminds me of those dieting movie stars. Why is she hiding behind the sheet? Maybe she doesn't have a stitch on. Oh, I see, there's a lion's shadow on the sheet. She's hiding from the lion. She ought to be ashamed—that sheet's tattle-tale gray all over. I get my sheets much whiter without harsh scrubbing or bleaching either.

I've never seen such goings on in all my born days. This next picture now. *The sublime moment*. That Dali man did this one too. Well, I never. Two fried eggs on a plate. That must be one of those new fangled plastic plates—it's all bent over. A razor blade and a telephone hanging over it? And they're all setting right smack in the middle of the desert just as big as you please. *The sublime moment*—what's it all about? Oh-h-h, now I see. That Dali is trying to prove that the desert is hot enough to fry an egg. He's sending the sound of

the egg frying over the phone to prove it. If that isn't smart! This Dali may not be so crazy after all.

Soft construction with boiled beans; a premonition of civil war. That's a funny name for a picture. I do declare! There's a woman's head, the spitting image of Mrs. Grone, that battleaxe. Yes sir, like as two peas in a pod. But where are the beans? That's just the thing for dinner tonight, the very rabbit's foot. I'll grind up what's left of the beef and have meat balls. John always has liked my meat balls. Said no could hold a candle to me when it comes to fixing meat balls. I don't like this picture. It's all cluttered up with extra arms and legs. Those are right pretty clouds—all white and fluffy like my wedding dress. Takes me back to the time John first took me to see his mother. That women is downright unladylike. Wine for dinner. She's always acted uppity to me—just because she has lace curtains at her parlor windows. You'd think to hear her talk I wasn't good enough for John. Why, John owes everything to me. If it hadn't been for me he'd be mixed up in some sort of monkey business like those New York lawyers.

Mercy me! Here's a picture called *Two pieces of bread expressing the sentiment of love*. Now that's just fine—two pieces of stale, moldy bread in love! If that doesn't beat all. I wonder if the bread's vitamin enriched. Did I remember to put bread on my shopping list? . . . Love! Foolishness, just foolishness. Take Jane now. I'll have no child of mine staying out until ten o'clock. Last night Jane was setting on the porch with that boy friend of hers just cutting up—giggling and laughing all night. Shameful. It just isn't proper for a seventeen-year-old girl to carry on that way. You can just bet they were up to no good. That Mabel she runs around with is a bad influence. I've a mind not to let that baggage set foot in my house.

Glory be, if this picture doesn't take the cake. Bent watches hanging on a tree. Is it really five o'clock already? Time for me to go. My goodness, there're bugs crawling on those floppy looking watches. Those are flies! Oh, I get it—time flies. Ha, ha! And I thought I didn't know what this Salvador Dali is all about!

WORDS

*What if today they displease
the master of yesterday?
Tomorrow they will satisfy
the master of today.*

—LUCY RODGERS

TRADITION IS EXPERIMENT

By MARTHA POSEY

Only the artists themselves are now looking for a new approach in art. There is little understanding between the public and contemporary art; for the average layman, although he is usually curious about art trends, refuses to accept anything that does not coincide with his present conception of what art *should* be, whether that conception is correct or not.

If the average college student can be considered as representative of the public's point of view (and I think she can), the general opinion of the public is that no experiment is necessary, for the public feels no need of change. Here, the only criterion for judgment is that a work of art must "look like something." The only reason a great deal of the outstanding work of the artists of the past is accepted by the majority of laymen is that the subject matter, the material objects, can usually be recognized at a glance. How many times has a puzzled student spectator looked at a college exhibit of works of abstract art, and been heard to say, "I know that's good, but what *is* it?" Among the public, there seems to be a general attitude which is greatly lacking in a logical sensitivity toward new ideas. What people do not understand, they cannot and will not accept. And where there is no understanding, there can be no appreciation.

Before the average person can comprehend the meaning of a painting, he must discard the reactionary, materialistic, approach. He must discard

all the past impressions that will conflict with a new approach of viewing art as Art. In order to understand, he must stop trying to see, and learn to *feel*. Experiment in art must not be confined to the artist alone.

In art, the most outstanding tradition has always been the tradition of experiment—a continuous evolution of new experience, new thought, and new approach, expressed by the individual. Creative experiment is essential to progress of any sort. In order to be progressive, a work of art must express the essential characteristics of the spirit of the age in which it is created. Any work that is not contemporary to its own time loses both its value and its effectiveness as a cultural contribution, for it becomes merely a contemporary imitation of a standard of values belonging to a civilization not its own.

Artistic experiment has been based on an academic tradition, deriving its principle of value from the great artists of the past. To these principles, contemporary artists have added a new approach. The foundation of individual approach is the need to express comprehensively the living content of a form in nature, according to a general law of art. The value of each individual artist's work lies in his ability to assimilate thought and sense activities by creating a new variation of a basic theme. It is only in this sense that art may have value both for the artist and for the spectator.

DREAM (1)

*I had a dream
About a chair
And I was sitting in it,
And a funny old teacher
With purple thread
Was doing some spinning in it.
And as she tried
With sage expression
Her very best to develop me,
A breathing cloud
Of chewing-gum
Slowly began to envelop me.
I took the case to a psychologist;
He referred me to a physiologist,
And I found that I'd been wandering around
For nineteen frustrated years
With a hidden desire
To write a satire
On that lovable guy named Freud.*

—GRACE ESTEP.

DREAM (2)

*I dreamt last night that Shakespeare's ghost
Sat for a civil service post.
The English papers of the year
Contained a question on KING LEAR
Which Shakespeare answered very badly
Because he hadn't studied Bradley.*

—GRACE ESTEP.

POIGNARD

*Agamemnon's battle sword
Was not so sharp, I find.
His was only made of steel,
And mine of words unkind.

Brutus' dagger was quite strong
To still a Caesar's breath,
Mine is stronger still, I think,
To cause a spirit's death.*

—BONNIE McCLOY.

ON SECOND FLOOR

By VICI DeVoe

She lay on the bed and looked at the cracked white ceiling. Her throat felt even sorer than it had that morning. She swallowed painfully and put a cold hand on her head. "Maybe I should go to the Infirmary," she thought. "But then they'd only swab my throat with argyrol and give me some white pills and I'd feel even worse." She got up slowly, walked to the desk and picked up a cigarette. "I shouldn't really be smoking, but my throat can't feel any worse than it does." She struck a match. The breeze from the window blew it out. "Damn," she growled, "Damn, damn, damn." She closed the window with a bang. It looked dark and cold outside. Darkness and cold and misery and boredom. It had permeated the whole day.

She went back to the bed and stretched out again, trying to relax, trying to sink into oblivion, lovely oblivion. The amplifier blared, "Katherine Whitaker, you have a telephone call." Katy had been getting a lot of calls in the two years that she'd been closely associated with her. "I could too if I flirted with every man like she does," she said to the opposite wall.

She closed her eyes and tried to see black, black black. "I should be studying. I should write a letter. I should wash out some socks." She rolled over on her stomach and stretched again.

Outside in the hall she heard loud sobbing and the shuffling of familiar footsteps. It was Katy and Marian, she could tell. The shuffling scraping gait of one and the short staccato step of the other. "Wonder if I should try gargling with some salt and water. Maybe it would help my throat." Suddenly the door opened. Marian came in.

"Hey Dot, did you hear? Oh, it's awful . . . Katy's brother has been killed in action . . . You know how she worshipped him . . . her mother just called . . . the poor kid can't stop crying."

"Gee, that's too bad. I'm certainly sorry to hear that. But, you know, she's not alone—a lot of people are losing brothers these days. I wondered what she was crying in the hall for." She put a cough drop in her mouth. "What happened?"

"He was killed in Germany . . . instantly . . . he was so good looking and just nineteen . . . Katy's only brother . . . I feel so sorry for her. I gotta go now, though there's nothing much I can do. Night."

Dot got up from the bed and went to the dresser. She brushed her hair aimlessly. "Too bad about Katy. She'd never known sorrow before. I should go down and see her. I've never seen Katy cry. She's always laughing and making wisecracks. My throat hurts. I'd better do something for it."

She walked to the sink and gargled for a few minutes. Her throat still hurt. "Gad," she mumbled, "What could be worse than a sore throat."

RETURN

Mary, I've come back!

No—stand there.

*Mary, I see dark African nights,
And a column of hopeless men,
Tired beyond belief,*

*The ominous comfort of trucks,
Patient protection from angry, spitting ships
That wait behind summoned clouds.*

*I see impersonal mountains
Leering from great heights,
Sheltering in their bosoms*

*A thousand nightmares of death—
And the pass, an evil, open mouth,
Hungry for us.*

*I see a gnawing loneliness
That robs even tears of relief,
When, waiting for the brevity of life to begin,
I looked for my comrades,
And found a pile of broken bodies sprawling
Before me, their arms flung awry
In silent desperation.*

Mary, I cannot see you!

Before me—not a girl—

But that beautiful blue mist

Of powder-smoke,

Forever leaving in its wake

Heaving, red-splashed forms

That groan and scream.

—AVIS RUSSELL.

CONFLICT

Shining hammers strike my brain,

I lie beneath the crushing flood

Of a molten silver rain.

Gentle creatures I thought kind

Show tooth and claw and make fierce strife

For what cannot be worth their strength—

A torn and restless life.

I know the biting pain of fire

Which does not light the shadowed, distant

Goal of my most strong desire,

Unknown land where hammerings cease.

Cool, tall corridors for the mind,

A quiet chamber for the soul,

And peace.

—GAY MORENUS.

BELLS

Dreams I held too close to lose

And thoughts I scarcely dare recall

Are gone.

Colors from another rainbow,

Sounds of flimsy tissue beauty

I've long since lost.

Eternity's an abstract thing

Of which I've no conception.

"They" punctuate my life

With bells.

—MILDRED RODGERS

SARAH

By DARE BLALOCK

Mac rubbed his fingers across his cheek and decided not to shave again. Rough—but Sarah liked it. As he thought of her, he grinned and started to whistle softly. God, Sarah was wonderful.

He looked at his half-naked reflection, admiring his hard muscles, his obvious strength. He stretched slowly and began to dress. When he came into the kitchen, his mother asked, "Mac, you really going over to Halls' tonight?"

"Sure am."

"People will talk."

"George's going to watch with her."

"Oh. Well, all right. You stay till Sarah's mother and daddy come down and then you talk to them for a while so they won't think you all are trying to hide nothing."

He kissed her and laughed. "O—kay. Don't wait up for me."

He cut across a couple of fields and climbed the last fence. Walking quickly to the tobacco barn, he called out, "Sarah?"

A harsh voice answered, "That you, Mac?"

"Yeah." She laid down a book and rose as he came up. He kissed her. "Hello."

"Hello."

"What you reading?"

"*Pride and Prejudice*."

"Why?"

"Back in school Miss Roberts told me to some time."

"Where's George?"

"Checking temperature inside."

George came around the barn. "H'lo, Mac."

"Hey, George. How's the tobacco?"

"Curing good." He threw another chunk of wood on the fire and picked up his algebra book. Mac and Sarah sat down on one side of the fire and began talking. With some help from them, George finished his lesson. He talked with them for a while and then went to sleep.

Mac asked, "Anything around here to drink?"

"Daddy's got a bottle of whiskey in that corner." Sarah got it and took a drink, passed the bottle to Mac. "He says it helps keep you awake while you're tending the fire."

"He's right." Mac drank deeply, fastened the bottle again, and began filling his pipe. He pulled Sarah closer to him. "When's your folks coming?"

"Just Daddy. Ten."

"Then we'll be alone till then." He moved his hand up a little.

She pushed it down. "George's here."

"He's asleep."

"Suppose he woke up? He might not even be asleep now."

He sighed. "Maybe I should sit on the other side of the fire?"

"N-no. But . . ."

"Sarah, you're sweet."

"Really, Mac?"

"Really. You're the most fun to be with."

"I like being with you, Mac." He rubbed his cheek slowly against hers. She observed, "You need a shave, darling."

"Mind?"

"Huh-uh. Not at all."

They roasted crabapples over the fire and ate them, black with smoke on the outside, nearly raw inside. They drank a little, the whiskey burning their throats. Mac wished Sarah would get a little drunk—she paid no attention to George now.

At ten, Mr. Hall came down to the barn with a newspaper and sent George to the house. Before he took a drink, he looked at the level of the whiskey and, not seeming worried, said nothing. Sarah listened to him and Mac argue about the election and was glad when her father picked up the newspaper. She and Mac sat a little farther apart, his arm over her shoulders. At eleven, she yawned and picked up *Pride and Prejudice* and started to the house. Mac walked with her. On the porch he kissed her goodbye. "Going to help with the curing tomorrow night?"

"Uh huh."

"Can I come over?"

"Yes."

"Be seeing you." He walked off, softly whistling.

It was over a week later that Mac was visiting the Townsends. Soon after he arrived, Sarah and Virginia Hope came in. After gossiping for a while, they all went into the kitchen for something to eat; Mac was amused by Hatty's obvious pride in her new home and the domestic way she acted. He wondered if Sarah and Virginia were really as delighted as they seemed to be by the kitchen. He didn't believe anyone could be.

After he and Sarah left Virginia at her home, they walked on towards Sarah's home, a couple of farms farther on. Sarah smiled and remarked dreamily, "Aren't the Townsends wonderful?"

"Think so?"

"Oh, yes. They're so happy. And the house is real nice. Hatty showed me over it right after they were married. It's all just as nice as the kitchen."

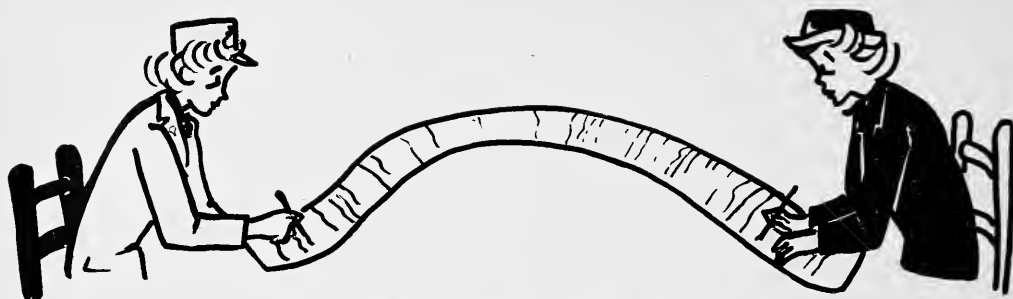
"Look, did you and Virginia mean all you said about that kitchen? It's just a kitchen."

"It's wonderful. Didn't you think so?"

"I can't get enthused about a kitchen."

"Really? Now, I'd rather have the sink on the other wall . . ." She described her ideal kitchen; Mac didn't listen to her. He wondered . . . As they were passing Mr. Brown's pasture, he drew her over to the rail fence and climbed on it. They

(Continued on page 18)



CAMP TO CAMPUS

EMOGENE THOMAS
CLASS OF 1945
CAMP ATTERBURY, IND.,
WAC.

I am writing by a flashlight after bedcheck (1:00 A.M. when you're on night classes) and yes I am on night classes. Don't let any one tell you the Army is boring because it isn't. When we got here we moved into an enlisted men's barracks. Now we—the lab tech's—are in BOQ Officer's Quarters—Wow — two people to a room, steam heat, automatic water heater, desks, latrines little different from those at W. C., and in all just a fine place to live.

Living on my hall now are four negro girls taking the same course I am. I spend more time in their rooms than in my own. They are wonderful. We sit down and discuss the race problem and we don't pull any punches. One, my favorite, has three years of pre-med and is going to Russia with several of us to study medicine after the war. There is a Russian girl on my hall. She's been here in America six years, lived seventeen years in China, and the rest in Russia proper. She is going to teach us Russian.

LUCY TAYLOR
CLASS OF 1944
LANGLEY FIELD, VA.

This might be called "Incidents in the Life of 'Na-ca Lucy'" or "How I became a member of the NACA—the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics."

We first gaze on the perplexed countenance of "Na-ca Lucy" as we find her amid bags, boxes, and packages on the main street of that great metropolis—Hampton, Virginia. 'Tis a bright and shining morning—the twenty-ninth of June to be exact. In a few minutes we see a station wagon driven by a member of the N.A.C.A. stop at the corner and envelope said girl and bags and escort her to Langley Field.

The first stop is at the employment office where

there begins the first in a series of long "waits." First they had her fill out numerous blanks although she was already perfectly sure that they knew all the secrets of her deep dark past. Were they satisfied with this? No, of course not. Next she was fingerprinted and the prints filed. Obviously crime on her part will never pay again.

At the Personnel Office Na-ca Lucy saw two of her old school pals—Julia Marsh and Matt Hicks. (The next day she was to see many more, Alberta Menzies, Jo Farthing, Mary Agnes Cochran, Rebecca Acker, Mary Thorn Taylor, and Dot Severance. She also was to see the former Square Circle president, Janet Broad, in town.) Anyhow to get back to our story. Having survived the ordeal she was told to report for work on the first of July.

Bright and early Saturday morning at eight-fifteen she reported for work and after being given a two-hour lecture on the danger of taking leave without pay unnecessarily or "How to get a quick discharge from the NACA," she was taken to the computing pool where she was to receive a brief review of the main types of mathematics needed at the Field.

... Na-Ca Lucy wasn't a bit homesick in the computing pool as her supervisor was a former Woman's College student and they had fun discussing the "good ole days."

Then she was transferred to the West Area of Langley Field. And if you don't think she was sick, about it, then one of us is crazy. A brief description might explain the situation. The NACA is erecting about fifteen new buildings in the West Area and the holes get deeper and the mounds of dirt get higher as the days go by. However none of you need worry for within a few months all will be changed, and the place will be lovely. Then, too, the people there are grand, especially the ones with whom she works—two of them having graduated from WC—Ethelda and Naca's supervisor—Mary Ellen Bass Mayo.

First Naca was assigned to reading records made at the Impact Basin (her home for eight hours each day). As the name suggests, the Impact Basin is especially interested in what hap-

pens when a plane or, as is used here, a model, hits the water and these records have been so made as to measure certain velocities and accelerations and other readings which aid the engineers in their work. . . . Oh, yes, Na-ca Lucy isn't through with school—she is taking Differential Equations at night school. And thus we leave Na-ca Lucy for now she must prepare that lesson for tomorrow night, for if one never learned anything else in the mathematics department of WC—it is to get up your lessons. No kiddin'.

GAIL TENNENT
CLASS OF 1946
HUNTER COLLEGE
WAVES

The campus here is pretty nice. The college buildings are beautiful. Our barracks are apartment houses. Our apartment has a kitchen, bath, two bedrooms and what was once a breakfast room. I guess one of the bedrooms was a living room. There are six bunks in each room. There are five girls in our room and six in the other. Now let's hear somebody fuss about a three-girl room!

We got our "boot" hats, G. I. shoes and Navy Nylons—lovely cotton numbers which we wear all the time. The rest of our uniform will be ready a week from this coming Saturday. We don't go anywhere alone but always march—to mess, etc.

The chow here is swell. Poor W. C. girls, I really feel sorry for you now. And though we go through a line it is different from school. They don't waste any time and we just fly through so fast that you don't even realize you've been in one.

The girls are all pretty nearly the same age and we all seem to be liking our new life fine. It's wonderful not to have to worry about what to do tomorrow—it's all done for you and you're told when, where, and how to do it. No studying so far and even if we do it won't be like what you and the rest of the poor kids are plowing through at W. C.

SOMEWHERE IN INDIA

You must think I am a boor writing to you with a pencil but if you knew the hardships of my life, I am sure you would be tolerant. What with almost being run over by rickshaws and trying to light a cigarette with the monsoon splashing all around me, I can't be expected to hold on to a fountain pen. But I bear my cross without a murmur of complaint.

The only thing I know about the war is what I read in the newspapers. I am in the hospital now, living about as I would in the states. For several months I was with the Engineers up in the sticks where life was rugged. Here I just feel as if I am keeping a WAC out of a job.

My stay in India will not be time lost, though, for the country is very interesting. I believe that

India will play a big part in the post-war world; it is the backbone of the whole colonial system. It is true that the country is not united, but the divisions are not as important as we are led to believe. They are more the result than the cause of foreign rule. I feel that self-determination will be worked out for the minorities and national unity strengthened rather than weakened thereby. Proper treatment for India is both a war and a post-war problem of the utmost importance. Of course the anti-Roosevelt, British-baiting feeling at home only serves to muddy the waters.

GUNNERY SCHOOL,
TYNDALL FIELD, FLA.

You say that if you were a man you would never date a girl who referred to you as "my man." Well, I am not so sure I like that "my man" idea either. "My man" meaning someone indispensable, a part of me almost, that's O. K. But "my man" meaning "See here, look what I have"—like a dog on the end of a leash—that's no go with me or any man. — So you see after all, it really isn't so much the words that matter, but what we're thinking when we use them.

PRE-FLIGHT SCHOOL
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

I am not very optimistic about the post-war world. Then, I think, the real battle begins. I can't understand this return-to-normalcy business—I can't see that there will be any normal that we can recognize by previous standards; and yet by all reports that is the only major war aim of the American soldier—to go back to what he left behind him. But—to be startlingly original—no one can ever go back, and the awakening will be rude.

MAXWELL FIELD,
MONTGOMERY, ALA.

After having been in the Army for a year and a half I have just about seen my fill of men. I should think that you girls in school would feel quite the same way. It is only natural, of course, because either way it's such an artificial mode of life. It makes me think of that novel by Eric Knight, *This Above All*, in which the young WAF said something to the effect that if she couldn't get away from women for a while, she would simply start screaming. Do you ever feel that way at W. C.?

PRE-FLIGHT SCHOOL
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.

I doubt that I am given to the collection of inhibitions, but if I am, I shall surely leave here well inhibited. A ruler is a necessity of life—we need it to measure the spot for the location of our

pillow, to measure the width of the "white-collar" sheet on our blanket, to measure the width of folds of the underwear on our shelves. All this, plus its use academically, although that seems minor at the moment. — As you can guess, it seems pretty trivial to be folding underwear exactly four inches wide when the pace of the war has quickened so tremendously . . .

AFTER CLASS

(Continued from page 5)

the street rose a little and reached the two blocks that were "uptown" I could see them going under the shadows of the orange-and-brown striped awnings. The street and its stores looked very warm and sleepy in the late afternoon sun. How would it be to be going home in Elmwood?—to three rooms at Mrs. Harris' as Mr. McAllister did? Maybe I wondered that because I heard his light tramp in the hall. He stopped in the door as though he was looking for someone, then came over to the window and looked down at the book I had brought in and was holding in my hand on the window sill.

"You ought not to work so hard," he said in his husky voice, looking at the book, then looking at me as though it took a little effort, so that his eyes got narrower as they met mine.

"It's not work—something you want to do isn't work—is it?"

"I never had thought about it." He looked out the window, and turned back toward the door.

It was the next week that he told us we had to start a project—looking at the floor, with his hand on Mildred's desk; nearly everybody else had gone out to lab.

"Good gracious, we've got enough—making a booklet every two or three weeks, and that manual . . ."

"Is everybody going to have one?" I asked.

He nodded, looking sideways at the floor again.

And the next afternoon he came up to our study hall in one of the classrooms to get us. He didn't come in and speak to Miss Flannagan about it but knocked on the door and waited outside. I was sitting on the front row, and I went to the door. He wasn't standing by it but was on the other side of the hall a little way down, standing uncertainly; he was in his shirt-sleeves.

"You and Mildred can come down and see about your project now."

"Now?" I had been busy translating French.

He nodded, grinning as if he were a little embarrassed. I went back in and whispered to Mildred.

"Let's don't go."

I was surprised. "He's waiting—want me to say we're too busy or something? Don't you think we might as well—"

She got up. Miss Flannagan glanced up.

"Mr. McAllister wants us downstairs."

"O. K."

Mr. McAllister was standing a little farther down and he began grinning when Mildred followed me out.

"Let's don't go," she said. We both stopped, and I giggled; then Mildred did too; for a second she looked as though she was enjoying this.

Mr. McAllister beckoned with his finger, in slow motion, as though he hadn't done it in years. Mildred started down the hall and I followed. It was dark in the hall downstairs, but sunshine fell out of the project room at the end when he opened the door. He left it open and we followed him in, and stood at the table. He stood there on one foot awhile, his elbow on the table, smiling at Mildred.

"Well—what do you want us to do?"

He laughed, and looked a little more embarrassed.

"Oh, fix up something—over there."

"Fix up what?"

"Oh—something pretty." At that, he blushed a deeper red and laughed again.

I was irritated by then. "I don't see any use in messing around with it today, till you know more about it." But he was looking at Mildred instead.

She was looking at him with a half-smile as though she were starting to practice some sort of personal magnetism on him; and looked as though she was about to say something.

"I'm going—she can tell me about it," I said. I went on out then.

The next morning I went to the elementary-school building to practice my music lesson before classes began at 8:30. I started to leave about 8:25, and I opened the door and met Mildred there, just outside, ready to open the door. She looked very serious and a little upset.

"I want to see you. Come on, we'll walk on back. I've got to do something, Edith. Listen. He came down to the house last night—to borrow a physics book, he said. Think—coming down to my house." She twisted her mouth in an irritated gesture, but it looked like a firm gesture too. "He told me yesterday afternoon that his wife tore his book up—and some of my papers. What'll I do? Go see Mr. Williams?"

"I don't know—if you want to. I don't know what else—but I'd sort of hate to—"

"I'm not going to have *my* reputation ruined."

"Go on if you want to." I knew the principal had always liked Mildred.

I walked uptown with her after school that afternoon. We didn't say anything for a block or so; then she suddenly glanced behind us and began.

"I cried, Edith—I just couldn't help it."

"You did?"

"I don't know why—he was real nice about it all and said he'd certainly take care of it. I didn't mind telling him, at all. He was awfully nice." She looked almost happy again.

"What else did he say?"

"Oh, nothing much. Said if he ever made any more passes at me to—" she stopped.

So that was that. That ended it as far as I was concerned; the school board didn't re-elect teachers till late spring. We didn't hear about that; but we did hear about the way Mr. McAllister, after talking with somebody, probably Mr. Williams, had walked into the home economics home room at the opposite end of the downstairs hall from his own establishment, motioned Miss Morris on out with a thrust of the thumb and asked the class how many of them had seen her and the agriculture teacher talking at the radiator outside the door, every morning. When they all raised their hands, he strode back out again. We never heard what he did with the information; maybe it was for personal satisfaction.

That was all. I stood and looked out of the library windows that afternoon after school. A cold March wind had begun to blow, below a cold gray sky, and children had already passed the uptown block. Out of the window I saw Mr. McAllister cross the street and start uptown, hatless, with his overcoat collar turned up. He put his hands in his pockets and the wind, at his back, blew the black overcoat tight about him. He walked up the street very slowly.

RUSSKY

(Continued from page 7)

So the next evening I took my dinner tray outside and found Russky sitting in the yard with a piece of meat in one hand and a crust of bread in the other.

"Good evening, Tovarishstsh," I said in Russian. We never spoke English to one another.

"Hello, little dove. Sit down. Are you tired?"

"Tired enough. I wouldn't mind it so much but for those men behind the counter. Do you know how they amuse themselves? By pinching me all day long. Don't smile; it's shameful! Especially when they're married—every one of them."

"Well, you must expect it. They're bums."

"You wouldn't do it, would you?"

"Ah, but I'm not a bum. I'm a hooligan."

I looked at him and shook my head. In the dusk the milk cans, the garbage pails, even the shrill metallic noises from the *Oasts* had receded and dispersed gently in the shadows. Russky had finished his meal, and with one superb gesture threw the meat bone at a meowing alley cat. Then he leaned against the wall and closed his eyes. He seemed to have forgotten me.

"You are not a hooligan," I said. I wanted to add, "No man who eats like a savage as gracefully as you can be a hooligan." But I refrained, and asked instead, "What are you really?"

"Your humble servant, Highness," he laughed and lifted my chin close to his face. "Isn't that what they call you here—Highness?"

"No, tell me. I don't even know your real name."

"Michael—you know, the archangel."

"Oh, Misha. And your father's name?"

"I had no father."

"How is that possible?"

"Well you see, I was born on a pear tree."

"On a pear tree? Oh . . . I, I see . . . I'm very sorry," I gasped in embarrassment.

"What are you sorry about, little dove?"

How could I tell him I was sorry he was an illegitimate child? I breathed deeply to keep the pity out of my voice.

"You must have missed your father."

"Oh no. I just fled into the arms of my mother."

"And who was she?"

"She was the sea. As harsh, as turbulent, as passionate a mother . . ."

"Ach, Misha, you are simply joking with me."

"No, I'm not, little one. I was a sailor. I used to ship from Vladivostok."

From then on we had an inexhaustible topic of conversation. The adventures of Misha were as brilliant as those of Sinbad the Sailor, but more absorbing because they were real, or perhaps because Misha told them.

As a *Gymnast* he had been careless about his studies; and when someone had offered him the chance, he had sailed on the *Nadejda*. During the next decade he managed to set foot on every country in Europe and learn a number of languages. At twenty-seven he had applied for a position at Dugan's, and twelve years later he was still a potato peeler.

Once I ventured to ask, "What are you doing here, really? Were you a counter-revolutionary?"

He looked into the dusk beyond and seemed not to have heard at all. "What? . . . Look here, I need a little something. Will you join me . . . some beer maybe? Well, never mind. Good night." He jumped up and disappeared into the dusk.

But the sound of his voice stayed with me, and my thoughts pursued the mystery of this man, my princely countryman. How could he, with his high forehead and bold shoulders, submit to the pulling-off of his hide? — Of all the employees at Dugan's I became Misha's most persistent devoteé. The coarse men who had pinched me let up, and Sullivan said it was because Russky had told 'em a thing or two. I was pleased. But Sullivan was skeptical. "Watch out, Sister; you don't know that guy," he said.

He was right. I did not know him until I knew his fatal weakness. Actually it was this weakness which caused me to fall in love with him. — But first I must tell you that at about this time I received an offer from a friend of my mother's — Madame Mirlovsky — to work at a consular service translating Russian. I was to call for an interview within a week. If not for Russky, I would have been overjoyed. As it was, I hesitated, and finally decided to keep silent about this offer.

Then Russky didn't come in one day, nor the following, and I began to worry. The others seemed uneasy too; yet when I questioned them they rebuffed me, told me it was Russky's own business if he wanted to take a day or two off.

Only one of the bus boys had a clue: He had seen Russky on a Canarsie Street subway at four that morning, but he would not go into detail.

On the third day Sullivan brought up the news of Russky's reappearance together with a basket of rolls.

"Russky's back," he whispered as he dumped the rolls on the counter. "He's back. But listen, you better leave him alone."

"What do you mean?"

"He's sick."

"Sick?"

"Yeh. Came in last night, an' he's still sleepin', and he don't wanna see nobody."

"But, Mike, if he's sick . . ."

"Listen, Sister," he said, "being that you're so Russian, you ever hear of vodka? Well, he goes in for that big. Fact is, all his guts are burned out with the stuff." He paused, and his face assumed an expression of awe. "God, how that guy can take it! When all the rest of us are out under the table, he's still sittin' there goin' strong, mutterin' poetry. Say, ever notice how he blinks and his hair's comin' out? He ain't so old. It's the wood alcohol that does it."

"No, it's not true."

"Whadaya mean not true! You shoulda seen him last night when he come in. His face all scratched up, smeared with dirt, and the shirt torn off him like he hit a bomb. I even had to give him my own shirt so as he . . ."

"Is he hurt?"

"Is he hurt! Are you kiddin'? How'd you feel if you'd spent the last two nights in the gutter?"

His words had their effect. I remember that afternoon I served a toothless man a crust of rye, and when he cursed me I exchanged it for a crust of pumpernickel. — I was crushed, distracted. I dreaded the sight of a drunkard who was Misha. But I did not hate him. Instead I hated the world that drove a man of such charm, such wit, such talent, to drink himself into oblivion and bury his face in the gutter.

Towards evening I went in search of him. I found him lying in the store room on a mattress of flour sacks with his head resting against a barricade of them. I had expected to see the ruin of a man, but in the dim light Russky appeared quite himself. Only a patch on his forehead hinted of his recent exploits. When I entered he put aside a paper, *Russki Golos** I think it was, but he did not rise. I walked up slowly; knelt by his side, and would have stretched out my arms in supplication, crying, "Ah, what have they done to you, my dear one!" or some such idiocy—had he not smiled at me brightly and completely unashamed.

"Nu, and how have you been here, little dove?" he asked. "I've been missing you."

I remained kneeling, motionless.

"Why do you look at me like that?" he demanded.

"From now on," I replied—and with stupen-

dous dignity, I assure you, "From now on do not call me *ti*** any longer. You may address me only with *vi****."

He laughed and shook his head. "Little dove, little dove, what is itching you?" And then he suddenly stopped laughing and muttered, "Damnation . . . Don't go away. Come here—closer. I want to tell you something. — Have you ever felt . . . no, I can see that you haven't. Never mind, I don't want justification; I don't need it. But one day — one night, rather — you'll understand, and you'll do the same, though maybe in a different way . . . Wait . . . listen:

"At night when the moon shines

When he shines . . . the devil, how he shines

I wend my way, head drooping

Through an alley, to a familiar bar.

Noise and din in this dreary den,

But all through the night, until dawn

I read my verses to prostitutes,

And swill alcohol with bandits.

My heart beats quicker and quicker,

My speech grows incoherent.

Like all of you, I am done for.

There is no comeback for me.

In these crooked streets

God must have destined me to die."

There was a pause. It lasted until my throat loosened.

"Did you write it?"

"Yessenin wrote it."

"Who is he?"

"A hooligan. A poet."

"Your friend?"

"In a way. He's dead. Had sense enough to hang himself rather than rot away. But just before he died, he slit his veins, and with his blood he wrote a poem . . . God, it would be easy to slit your veins if you could write such a poem . . ."

"Misha . . ."

"Yes?"

"What if you are a second Yessenin?"

"How sweet you are."

"No, I mean, if you showed your poems to some publisher, and he . . ."

"But you are sweet. Sweet as a dove . . . Little dove . . . come, smile . . . lift your chin. Well, what's the matter?"

He rolled over to lift my chin. He kissed it. And before I had time for awareness his lips found mine, and all the stiffness and defense flowed from me, and I couldn't break away; I didn't want to. I'd never felt anything so utterly compelling, so weakening. It was like sinking into the earth and letting dark, turbulent waves enfold you.

But Misha proved wrong: I was not a dove. There was a streak of reason in me, and with that streak I pushed him away.

"Are you afraid of me?"

"Not of you," I said, "not of you, but of myself." I turned and walked out quickly.

* * * *

*The Russian Voice. **Thou. ***You—polite form.

At this point Arkechevskaya paused. She was

breathing deeply, and a flush had spread over her cheeks.

One of the guests seemed disappointed.

"So he did not become your lover?"

Arkechevskaya smiled and continued her narrative.

* * * *

I thought in terms of love then, not of lovers. As I said, I was young, and a simpleton. Still, I would not deceive myself. I knew now that what I wanted to salvage was not just Russky's charm, and wit and talent, but the whole man—and for myself.

My plan for saving him was colossal. It was a plan of very young and untried determination. First, I called up Madame Mirlovsky and asked whether I could be interviewed for the job she'd offered at her apartment. And might I bring a friend along? She said yes, and invited us one evening the following week. In this way I planned to present Russky to her. And upon convincing Madame Mirlovsky of my inability to translate Russian, I would persuade her to hire Russky instead.

For the next few days I flooded the man with sympathy; but he withstood the flood gracefully, with his habitual good humor, and finally agreed to come to my home for tea one night the following week. The night of the "tea," of course, would be the same as the night of the interview. I would simply give him Madame Mirlovsky's address as my own, and meet him outside of her house. Then, quickly, before he could form suspicions, I would maneuver him upstairs, and he would have a clean, decent, respectable job dropped into his lap.

My confidence and my happiness mounted day by day. Since Misha's salvation was so near at hand, I allowed him the liberty—and myself the delight—of a kiss every morning and every evening. Oh, it was a touching courtship. On the eve of the decisive day Misha promised me to take tomorrow off to "bring himself in order."

The next morning his absence disturbed Sullivan. He approached me aggressively. "What's wrong with Russky?" he demanded. "That guy got his pay and took the day off to buy new pants. Says it's on account of this important appointment. Important appointment, my foot! — Say, whada you know about this?"

"What should I know?" I asked, smiling with inward satisfaction.

Sullivan thrust his hands in his pockets.

"Listen Sister," he said, "I know what yer tryin' to do. And lemme tell ye, yer nuts. Plain nuts." But this time his words made no impression.

Eight o'clock, the appointed hour, found me waiting in front of Madame Mirlovsky's apartment house. I had adorned myself for the occasion in one of those long-waisted atrocities so fashionable at the time. Mine was of sky-blue taffeta. It had a bunch of violets at the waist and some pink lace for a collar. Can you imagine anything more demure, more fetching? — I had the utmost

confidence. I leaned against the wall and gazed beyond the tree tops. The wind blowing gently around my temples brought me visions of a glorious future.

The doorman blurred then when he stepped to my side and asked whether I was waiting for someone.

"It's all right," I nodded, "He'll be along any minute."

I went on waiting, but without leaning against the wall. I was intent upon ignoring the doorman. — After half an hour he repeated his question. By that time I was no longer dreaming of a hazy future; my concern was more immediate.

"I think he must have been delayed," I said.

The wind had become chilly when that doorman approached me for the third time. "Sorry, Miss," he apologized, "but you're not supposed to loiter here."

So I left. Walking to the subway I took care not to avert my eyes from my shoes . . . What I felt . . . Were you ever very unhappy? So unhappy that your sadness went beyond its limits and you reached a sort of exaltation? It was like that with me. But even though I kept my head bent, my optimism—the insane and marvelous optimism of youth—it was still with me. I rode to the neighborhood of the *Oasis* and went in search of Russky. I went from bar to bar, from one liquor store to another. I don't think I omitted one within a radius of a mile. And they all seemed to know my love. Finally someone told me to try Jake's Club; that was one of his favorite hide-outs.

I remember Jake's Club vaguely, as a version of the Inferno. But I walked quickly through its smoke and asked the bartender, "Have you seen Russky?"

The bartender looked first at my violets, then at me, and grinned.

"Well, well, well, so the little lady wants to see Russky?"

"Please, have you seen him?"

He winked at a customer, "Say who woulda thought Russky went in for her type?"

The customer looked up from his glass. "Ain't he the nut with the po-try?"

"Then he was here, wasn't he?"

"Been here all day," said the customer.

"But where is he now? Really, this is important. I've got to see him."

"Yea? Well, it ain't his office hours," stated the bartender and continued to grin.

"Just for a minute—please. I guess I know the state he's in. If you'd only tell me where he is . . ."

"Say, she wants to know; shall we tell 'er?"

The bartender and the customer looked at each other. They could hardly suppress their laughter.

"You can't see him, Girlie, he's takin' his beauty nap."

"But where? I can . . ."

"In there." He pointed to a little door marked "Gents", and after that they no longer bothered suppressing their laughter.

I made my way through the smoke and sat down

on the curb in front of Jake's Club. My head felt heavy, so I rested it on my knees. People who passed by cast sidelong glances. They thought I was drunk. And I wished to be drunk. Drunk to oblivion.

* * * *

Arkechevskaya had finished, but none of us stirred. The gray-haired, spidery gentleman who had challenged her was studying the pattern of the rug. After a while he looked up and cleared his throat. He said, "And you would still consider him—after all these years?"

"After all these years!" she exclaimed, laughing. "My dear sir, do you think it has been so many years since I was young?"

The gentleman was profusely apologetic, but Arkechevskaya waved him aside, and we were dismissed for the night.

SARAH

(Continued from page 11)

sat on the top rail, his arm about her waist. She said, "And I want a bigger refrigerator than they've . . ."

"Ah, to hell with kitchens. Love me, Sarah?"

"Uh huh. Love me?"

"You bet. I'm crazy about you." He was still for a few moments, then swung his legs over to the other side of the fence and jumped down. Sarah lost her balance and fell backwards. He jerked her off the fence and dropped her.

"Mac!"

"God, Sarah, I want you!"

She sat up. "Are you crazy?"

He pushed her down. "No. You know it."

"Let me up. Stop!" He kissed her roughly. She started to cry out; Mac put his hand over her mouth, whispering urgently, "Sarah—Sarah—you're so damn sweet."

"Please, Mac—we can't."

"Why not?"

"Mac—I love you—but I won't . . ."

"Lord, Sarah—darling—"

Sarah turned over and began quietly to cry. Mac sat watching her in pity; then he reached out and patted her shoulder. She jerked away from him. "Please don't. Oh, God, why'd you . . ."

"Sarah, honey, don't cry. Please don't cry." She only wept. He was silent for a few uncomfortable minutes; then he suggested awkwardly, "Hadh't we better go on?"

She turned facing him. "Can't." She sniffled. "You fool. I'll never—how'd you think—Oh-h-h-h . . ."

"But you've got to. Your folks'll be worried about you."

"Ought to—would *kill* 'em—God, I can't!"

"Come on, Sarah." He pulled her up gently and started brushing the leaves off her.

"I can't go home. How can I?"

"They won't know. How could they?" He felt very sad. She slowly brushed her skirt. He helped her climb the fence, and they walked the rest of the way to her home in silence. She looked at the dark house and said quietly, "I believe they've all gone to bed."

"Good night."

"Good night." He watched her go into the house and turned to go on home. As he walked up the road, his depression faded. Almost home, he began to whistle.

Sunday, the McPhersons reached church after the Halls; Mac took the seat beside Sarah. The tension between them got on his nerves. He didn't believe Sarah heard the sermon, although she gazed at Mr. Waring intently. He didn't hear, either.

After church, the two families stood talking, and he asked her to go to a movie Thursday. It was one which Sarah had said she wanted to see, and he didn't think she would risk her parents' questions by refusing. He was right.

Thursday, Mac was nervous. The empty feeling in his stomach worried him, but he wanted to see Sarah. They hardly spoke until after the movie, when they were eating at Joe's. Seated in a booth at the back of the room, Sarah said quietly, "Mac, you've got a lot of nerve."

"Yeah?"

"Coming up and asking me for a date, after Friday."

"Well, you came."

She shook her head, dug her fingers into the hamburger. "I was afraid to say I wouldn't with everybody there, and I couldn't find an excuse later not to."

"You can't have minded so much."

She choked and shivered. "Let's go." Driving home, she sat quietly, staring unhappily at the road. At her door, he asked, "Can I come in?"

"I'd rather you didn't."

"Then—goodbye."

"Goodbye."

He was hopeful as he put the car up. She couldn't be too angry with him—no telling.

The next week, driving home from a play at the school, he stopped and took Sarah in his arms. She pleaded, "Don't, Mac."

"Yes."

"Please, let's go home."

"I don't want to."

"I do."

"No, you don't. God, Sarah." He couldn't find words. He kissed her; her mouth was hard, stubborn.

"I won't."

"Yes, you will."

She began to cry. He kissed her again, his hands moving over her body. "Please?"

"I'm afraid."

"You needn't be. I love you."

"I love you too, but . . ."

* * * *

Sarah became Mac's girl. They were always seen together. Once Mrs. McPherson asked him

if he were going to marry Sarah; he was startled. Then, slowly, as he thought of it, he smiled. And he said, "You know—I think I might."

"I'm glad. She's a very nice girl, Mac. There's no girl around here I'd rather see you marry."

"She's swell. And I like her a lot. Yes, I think I will." He mused for seconds, nodded slowly. "I think I will."

But Mac said nothing to Sarah of marriage. Their affair drifted on, each of them feeling the danger and pleased by it. Sarah never protested any more; he wondered why.

One night in February, Mac took Sarah to a play given by George's class. Sarah didn't pay much attention to it, although George was a leading character. Afterwards, they went to Joe's and watched the high school crowd and were nostalgic. On the way home, Mac turned into a narrow road. Sarah waited until he parked the car and turned to him. "Mac, you've got to marry me—quick."

"Huh?" He was jolted.

"I said you got to marry me. I'm—going to—have a baby."

"God, I'm sorry."

"That don't do any good. No more than that stuff I got at the drug store."

"What stuff?"

"Oh, I tried to—get rid of it—but it didn't work."

He was shocked. "Don't, honey. I want to marry you. I've been aiming to ask you for several weeks." He could see that she didn't believe him. "When's it going to come?"

"It's over a month old."

"I'll be damned." He felt queer inside. "Have you been sick?"

"No, that's how—oh—oh, just once, and not very bad."

"We'll get married soon and say it come early."

"Oh, Mac, you're a fool. They never believe it's early if it's born soon after you get married. I wouldn't." She stared beyond him at the woods.

"Sunday?"

"All right, Sunday."

When he got home, Mac walked into his mother's room and woke her up. "Mother, I'm going to marry Sarah—Sunday."

She sat up. "Sunday? That's mighty soon. I'm glad, but . . ."

"Sunday. After church we're going to the Halls' for dinner, and that afternoon," he sat down on her bed, "Sarah is Mrs. McPherson."

"Well!" She got up and put on her bathrobe. "Let's talk about this!"

Sunday, there were a few sprinkles of snow. It drifted down softly, flaking the brown earth. At the parsonage, Mr. and Mrs. Waring greeted the Halls and the McPhersons. Mac stood, holding Sarah's hand tightly and muttering answers to half-heard questions. When Mr. Waring asked if there were any objection to the marriage, Mac clutched Sarah's hand yet more tightly, afraid. But there was none.

After the ceremony was ended, Mac and Sarah walked out to the car through the snow, now falling heavily.

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